

AN ITALIAN HOLIDAY.

To some people, the most delightful form a holiday can take is hard work at some new thing. Given the power—physically, mentally, and financially—work in the shape of assimilating entirely new scenes under new conditions and with new people, is a tonic which confers a lasting benefit.

Such a holiday it was my happy lot to enjoy this last Christmas, and I want, however badly, to try and make others realise a little of some of the joy of it. The idea was conceived in October, when Dr. Lunn's winter programme came out. It was made possible by some unexpected guineas, and carried out in the teeth of all the opposition family, weather, and the sentiment of Christmas could give. We left London three days before Christmas in the blackest fog. We arrived—because of London's fog—two hours late in Bâle the following day, to the most brilliant sunshine, and from that time onward every moment was pure joy.

The hills covered with white pine trees; the snow that made every word of Hans Andersen true; the Lakes that were sheets of colour; the mountains and torrents and villages, and everywhere the sunshine. Lucerne was a stopping place for lunch—anachronistic, almost sentimental, and distinctly operatic. A sleeping town, with everywhere signs of the glory of summer eclipsed for a brief period of beautiful winter.

The next day was real Italy. Why are our useful things never so beautiful as we find them abroad? Railway bridges and aqueducts only made the depth of the gorges they spanned more impressive.

Milan was a rattle of stones and a glare of electricity, followed by the most delicious bed one could wish for after two days in train. The early start forbade further impressions, and the day wore on in delight till the long sweep of the Campagna led up to a realisation of the City of the World, and we were actually in Rome—not reading it, nor dreaming it, nor planning; but there in absolute reality.

What can I say about the ten days that followed? It would bore everyone if I tried to give a diary or even a picturesque itinerary of the special days, so I will try and only say the things that now stand out most.

First, I think, colour. I had imagined Rome would be grey, like York. St. Peter's I pictured as St. Paul's in London, with all the houses round it taken away. The Seven Hills I thought would be quite distinct, and one would be able to walk all round, again like York, in an afternoon. But I was absolutely wrong. Only a very few Church fronts and the pillars in the Forum are grey; other buildings are either pure white or else reddish yellow. That is the colour of St. Peter's and the Coliseum, and both are vast with a vastness that includes time as well as space. The houses in the streets are full of colour—the shutters, the signs, the stucco. By the Tiber there are the backs of some old houses that have been about to be pulled down for the past five years that are a perfect harmony of reds and yellows and vivid greens.

I think the Tiber is most like one has imagined it to be—yellow and wide and silent and swift. I saw a grey wagtail there on Christmas Day; and a lesser tortoise-shell butterfly in the street outside my hôtel in the sunshine.

There are so many steps in Rome—great wide, shallow, sunny steps—the very place for banks of flowers and swarms of impudent picturesque children. And the ordinary people that passed one in the street are so interesting: scarlet German cleric students, white benedictines, black friars and brown friars. Imagine the thrill of being begged of by a real Franciscan with bare feet and a begging-bowl. St. George's room was always in my mind, and impressions that date from there were being continually readjusted.

A day was spent at Tivoli—the Richmond of the Emperors. Pink roses were out in all the borders, and we lunched out of doors, within sight of a hundred waterfalls, and Horace's house on the hill. Think of a day on the Appian Way, between the ruins of a thousand tombs, with miles of long straight white road going on before us until it was lost in the horizon. The broken arches of the great aqueduct telling such a splendid tale of vanished glory, and the Campagna sheep still watched over by the Campagna dog. We lunched in an arbour that day, and were served

by a beautiful fair-haired woman called Vittoria, who showed me "il piccolo piccolo" asleep in a clothes basket while she cooked wonderful omelettes over a handful of charcoal on a place that I suppose was an oven, but which looked like a boiler copper. There we saw the Catacombs—so small! Narrow, warm, dark brown, endless. Here a skull, there a lovely piece of iridescent glass, overhead frescoes of painted cupids and Venus doves. I thought they would be wide and damp and echoing; but two people could not pass each other.

What shall I say about the inside of Rome? The museums and galleries, where it was always time to go when you were beginning to feel at home? I think the Wolf of the Capitol I loved best, and then the sleeping Venus in the Borghese Gallery. And quite differently the heads of the Emperors and Philosophers in the Capitol. How one could have loved to listen to the delicacy of Cicero! and how indulgent one felt towards Socrates! I mean the man who had no happiness, not the thinker. Then the beauty of Aristotle. Here the dining-room at Scale How was very vivid to me; and how I wished I was not cursed with facility. Marcus Aurelius is not so human as the others. Plato was not there. I feel now that their philosophy was the expression of themselves as well as of their time, and that they were moderns, much nearer to us than Locke or Rousseau, or even than Herbert Spencer or Matthew Arnold.

I have not said a word about churches, processions, bambinos, pictures, mosaics. Each had its own story, and told it with a force that grew as the days went on.

But I want to tell you of the other ten days, when I had thrown my halfpenny into the Trevi and said "Good-bye" to Mecca and turned North to Medina. A cold but intensely interesting journey brought me to a town that was known as "the City of Towers," Siena, a daughter of Rome, with the Roman wolf for her arms, and three of Rome's seven hills for her foundations. Could I say, or any of us say, what we owe to Mrs. Firth? I think not.

Siena has not moved, to all intents and purposes, since the death of St. Catherine and the recovery from the plague of the fourteenth century, which meant the building of the Cathedral.

There are the walls, the piazzas, and the palaces, the churches—the very shops and oxen and wine carts exactly as they were then. One respects and adores Rome, but one passionately loves Siena. The Sienese are so intrinsic—they love detail and they see the beautiful.

Since I came home I have been reading the Life of Burne-Jones. He loved Siena, and says beautifully all that I would like to say badly. It is so little—and yet there is no idea in it that is not big. The banquetting hall in the Palazzo Municipale, where Peace sits with Good Government, and Justice dispenses punishment and reward—how great it is! The fresco has perished rather; and the custodian, a most friendly guide, assured us Peace held a "cigarro" in her hand, emblematic of her contemplative state of mind! His imagination outran his respect, shall we say?

In the Hospital della Scala, into which we penetrated by the push of an American acquaintance, I could not pay as much attention to the pictures as I might because of the beautiful white hospital attendants and their little invalid charges, that constantly passed and repassed us. Baedeker and Gardiner are both rather bald here. I wanted to know exactly how the modern hospital was done.

It's no use saying I saw the Kneeling Knight, and the Donatello, and the Pinterruchios, and the marvellous floor—of course I did; and they were real, especially the Knight. But somehow the pulpit was too big. I was very sorry I felt it so—but it was too big to see.

We stayed three days near Florence, but I did not try to see it. There was not time. Giotto's Tower is all that any one has ever thought it would be, and much more. One would like to live beside it for always, because it would be so sympathetic. San Marco is the imitation in colour. How grateful Savanorola will have felt sometimes for the peace of those quiet Madonnas and the holiness of the Saints who adore without strife.

We stayed in the hills above Florence, and I found butcher's-broom with its little red fruit. It comes in Il Sano's pictures, and the Tuscans use it instead of holly for Christmas decorations. And I brought back a giant cypress fruit for the children's N. N. Books. It has split since in a most entrancing way. There were lemons growing in our garden, and I think we made our own wine! and we were

within sight of Vallombrosa from our bedroom window, so I need not say we were happy, or the place was perfect, or any other obvious comment.

The journey home included half a day with Erasmus at Basle, and ended with a splendid crossing and much good luck with trains and customs. But the end of this is not yet. I write at the half-term, not more tired than I was after the first week, and with the scenes before me so vividly that I dare not let my thoughts go. Prosaic details are: £20 for twenty-one days. And I shall be very pleased to give any one addresses.

E. C. ALLEN.

HARMONIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN PHYSICAL TRAINING & HANDICRAFTS.

Mens sana in corpore sano!

To those who have even casually studied the Ling System of Swedish Gymnastics, the harmonious working of these two points is immediately felt.

The prompt individual action required from each pupil, the gradual progress from simple to difficult exercises and the idea that "each individual is the unit by which his strength must be measured" appeal with force to the Educationist. Can this development of mind and body be still further carried out?

A few words on another Swedish educational system—Slöjd—may be an answer to the question.

The word Slöjd is recognisable in our own *sleight* of hand, and Slöjd or Sloyd the *thing* is a system of educational school hand work, which can be carried on throughout the whole of the school life of boys and girls. We say *can*;—ought it not rather to be emphasised that Sloyd is an essential part of every school curriculum and of paramount importance!

It should be clearly understood that it is Card-board Sloyd that is considered essential for the full development of the child, and not Wood Sloyd, which is of secondary and later importance.

To each child is given a thin piece of card-board, a sloyd knife, a ruler marked off into centimeters, and a strip of glued binding. After a few essays in cutting and binding the child begins simple models, such as mats, key labels and other flat articles, which by gradual progression lead on to slip covers, boxes, portfolios, photograph frames, and eventually to bookbinding.

At first the fingers have little power of manipulation and the knife is an unruly instrument, but it is not long before complete command of tools and materials is gained.

Some of the immediate results of Cardboard Sloyd training are, deftness of fingers, accuracy of eye, and perfection of finish, all unconsciously acquired by the enthusiastic worker. In the opinion of experts no other handicrafts afford so good an ethical training as that gained through a course of Sloyd. The exactitude and truthfulness of the work promotes the tendency to veracity and uprightness in conduct; firmness in the use of tools leads to decision of action; while the discrimination between good and bad work, gained by experience goes far towards choosing between what is valuable or worthless in life.

Moral progress in the individual necessitates self-respect and self-confidence in the individual; therefore the feeling that he can create and complete his own model unaided is of the utmost educational value to the child.

Self-confidence should not in any way counteract the no less important virtues of admiration of good work in others, and a desire to give of one's best to them.

In considering Educational Handicraft Training, it is interesting to those engaged in Physical Training to see how much the one may depend upon the other for perfection.

It may be said that a perfect system of handicrafts tends to increase and refine on individual lines the powers of mind and body already developed by a perfect system of gymnastics.

We can see how the finger stretching and clasping paves the way for the individual use of the ten fingers, when binding or glueing a Sloyd model. The nerve and decision gained in the grasping and suspension movements help in the mastery and use of tools; while wrist exercises considerably ease the sweeping movements so often needed in wood-carving.

A complete course of Educational Handicrafts would

include book-binding, wood-carving, embossed leather work, hammered brass, clay modelling, basket work, needlework, &c.

In Swedish Gymnastics as well as in Card-board Sloyd and other handicrafts we note (*a*) the materials used are adapted to the strength of the individual, (*b*) they are graded in order of difficulty, (*c*) they must be interesting, and (*d*) that the best results are obtained by the concentration of the will.

Increased physical development necessarily demands as an outcome, some form of manual work. Concentrated animal force may become an evil, but provide a rational outlet and such force becomes a powerful factor in ethical progress.

To the brain-worker, the highly strung or physically delicate, the quiet influence of a handicraft is of great benefit—a delightful hobby, and a most restful recreation.

Brain energy can in some cases be stimulated only by means of increased activity of the fingers, and in these days of neurotics and highly strung persons of all ages, it is well for Educationists to realize how important a part Educational Handicrafts (based on a thorough knowledge of Card-board Sloyd) are likely to play in the treatment of normal as well as abnormal children.

The idea is borne in upon one, that in order to rightly carry out the spirit of the Ling System, more attention should be given to the careful articulation of the fingers in order that the mental powers may be further developed and strengthened.

It has been well said that some of us are "hand-brained," and thus dependent to a great extent on manual dexterity for mental activity. Others may seemingly require no such stimulus, in which case handicrafts should be considered in the light of restorative nerve tonics.

It will be interesting to know how far a Swedish Gymnastic Teacher would agree with such further development of a system which aims at producing "in each individual the highest possible degree of health and physical culture." The Teacher of Handicrafts sees a much greater advance in mental and moral force where the child is physically and mentally exercised on the splendidly sane lines of Peter Henrik Ling's Gymnastic System. Thus arises the natural question:—Would not trained Gymnastic Teachers add to

their scope of influence by taking Handicrafts as a Third Year Course? In this way not only gaining quiet recreative employment for themselves, but considerably increasing their professional value personally and pecuniarily.

J. W. DEVONSHIRE,

Junior Principal of the Croft School,
Betley, nr. Crewe.

NOTES IN NORWAY.

DEAR EDITOR,

Here is a somewhat late account of our summer holiday in Norway.

We were a large party, A to L, numbering nine souls, and Z was aged three.

We trained to Hull on the 8th July, 1904, and embarked on S.S. Monte Bello of the Wilson Line. She is rather a good boat as boats go, and is an artiste at rolling. On the way across we went through the famous fishing fleet—we saw no torpedo boat among them! There were a few birds—the common gull and others of that ilk. We arrived at Christiansand at night, so missed the beautiful coast with its many islets. Spent the night in Ernst's Hotel, which is not particularly interesting. Christiansand is quite a modern town, strictly geometrical; most of the houses are of wood, and look very clean and neat.

The next morning we started off in little open carriages drawn by two small horses (about 14'2) on a long 35 mile drive over hill and dale to our destination. The road was good, and the gradient very gradual with one or two exceptions. The dust was appalling—three inches of light granite powder which flew up all round us. The day was glorious, and though we were nearly eight hours on the road everyone was happy and cheerful. The first thing that struck us on leaving Christiansand and striking the woods